IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of

i) contacting a test compound with a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide, and

ii) detecting ~~detect~~ binding of said test compound to said NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide.

2. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of

i) determining ~~the~~ activity of a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide at a certain concentration of a test compound or in the absence of said test compound, and

ii) determining the activity of said polypeptide at a different concentration of said test compound.

3. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of

i) determining the activity of a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide at a

certain concentration of a test compound, and

ii) determining the activity of a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide at the presence of a compound known to be a regulator of a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the step of contacting is in or at the surface of a cell.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the cell is *in vitro*.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the step of contacting is in a cell-free system.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the polypeptide is coupled to a detectable label.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the compound is coupled to a detectable label.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the test compound displaces a ligand which is first bound to the polypeptide.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the polypeptide is attached to a solid support.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the compound is attached to a solid support.

12. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal,

comprising the steps of

i) contacting a test compound with a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polynucleotide, and

ii) detecting ~~detect~~ binding of said test compound to said NAALADASE-LIKE1 polynucleotide.

13. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein the nucleic acid molecule is RNA.

14. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein the contacting step is in or at the surface of a cell.

15. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein the contacting step is in a cell-free system.

16. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein polynucleotide is coupled to a detectable label.

17. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein the test compound is coupled to a detectable label.

18. (currently amended) A method of diagnosing a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of

i) determining the amount of a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polynucleotide in a sample taken from said mammal, and

ii) determining the amount of NAALADASE-LIKE1 polynucleotide in healthy and/or diseased mammals.

19-20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising a therapeutic agent which regulates the activity of a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide, wherein said therapeutic agent is

i) a small molecule,

ii) an RNA molecule,

iii) an antisense oligonucleotide,

iv) a polypeptide,

v) an antibody, or

vi) a ribozyme.

22. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polynucleotide.

23. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of a disease selected from the group ~~comprised in a group of diseases~~ consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, gastroenterological diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, neurological diseases, reproduction disorders and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising a NAALADASE-LIKE1 polypeptide.

24-26. (canceled)